Painting the Pope's Portrait

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Catholic I have alluded to before. He would bring if he could, and he declared this more than once, peace and happiness to the world regardless of creed. For here he said in substance that any man's religion, so long as it remained simple and modest, has the same right as that of the child in the cradle, to await the future for the testing of its worth.

"As to my own creed or religious belief the Pope never asked a question. He did not seem surprised when I told him I attended the reception to the pilgrims, but I admit that, without waiting for his comment, I explained that I went to it as to another sitting that I might get the broadest comprehension possible of the subject of my picture.

"Once I told him I had visited this or

The Portrait Made for Archbishop Hayes.

that church in Rome, whereupon he would ask me concerning some celebrated picture or statue to be seen there. He knew them all and had his judgment of the art value of each treasure. Nor did these always correspond to the accepted view, for the Pope seems to have his own opinion about everything in the realm of art."

The artist said that as the painting neared finishing the Pope's interest grew and the Pope would bring various members of his entourage to look at it. That is, he would ask a member of his official family or a Cardinal to go to the room where the artist was at work after the sitting proper. The sittings he suffered no one to interrupt, not even his sister.

"Next day the Pope would repeat what the newest critic to visit the improvised studio opposite the Raphael loggia had said about the portrait.

"As these criticisms were nearly all favorable His Holiness would repeat them to me with a benevolent smile.

"'It is very much like me,' said the Pope, when the end had nearly come, 'and if I cannot myself go to your country I am happy to rely on so true a presentment. One can do no more. In the Pitti palace we speak not with the Mighty Julius, but with his phantom.'"

Mr. Muller-Ury did not ask for a farewell reception by the Pope. Nor did he bid his famous subject a last good-by.

"I sneaked away," said he, "pausing only to say to Mgr. Caccia that I was very grateful to him and everybody who had made my task easier than it might have been. The Monsignor replied that neither he nor the Pope had done anything but that I had done it all myself. And if I kept my promise and sent back the third portrait of the Pope all Rome would be happy to think I had been there.

"There is a little Italian poetry in this speech, I acknowledge, but it wasn't needed to spur me on. I shall gladly keep my promise and paint a portrait of the Pope for the Pope himself."

A Farmer on the Middleman

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tellin' 'em I was a grower an' askin' what they had to pay a bar'l. That geeser had told the truth, but six dollars was lower'n any price I heard. They run all the way to ten.

When I told them fellers I'd jest sold forty bar'ls fer $1.46 a bar'l f. o. b. Bascom's Bridge they most shed tears askin' me did I have any more. The last place I stopped at I didn't do any talkin'. I just bought two pears. I wrapped 'em up careful in a clean hank'chief an' a paper an' carried 'em all the way home. When I got in the house I handed 'em to my wife, who was over the stove warmin' up some baked beans fer supper. "Ma," I says, "there's two Clapps pears I bought fer ye in the city."

"Joshuay," she says, tightenin' up her mouth, "be you crazy? Huh! Buyin' pears when we got a hull half bushel in the cellar."

"Not them kind, you ain't," I says; "them cost ten cents apiece."

She looked 'em all over, 'n' bimeby she says: "They don't look no different from ourn that you got less 'n half a cent fer."

"Oh, yes they be," I says; "these pears has be'n systematized."

"Well," she says, "I wish they was some way we c'ld systematize 'em before they leave the farm; then mebbe I c'ld git outa this kitchen fer a spell before I go to glory."

"They ain't a chanst, Ma," I says; "farmers ain't never learnt how to do it."

But after that I run into a Jewish feller that used to be in the fruit game in Murray street himself, an' he told me how it was done. It's as simple as steppin' on a tack an' makes a feller feel just about as prayerful. Ye see, when the stuff comes to the dock, which is the sellin' headquarters fer the club members, they's a kind of a scale o' prices, a confidential upset, an' except they's a bare market, when it's every feller fer himself, it travels jest about so. Whatever the price is nobody worries much.

But this first turnover is what the farmer gits paid on, an' it's kep' as low as possible so's to leave a margin fer the ground an' lofty tumblin' that they do afterward. If the price kin' be kep' down so low that the farmer gits back a freight debit instid of a check, then he's paid all the costs of production an' shipment an' paid the commission man fer losin' him money on it. He sends in his check to make up the loss an' the dealer holds the stuff fer nothin'. From that time on the gross rereceipt is all velvet. No wonder that feller agreed with me when I said I was a sucker.

But whatever the first price is, there's where they start pyramidin' fer the consumer. Ye know they's a law to govern this commission business. I don't know what commission man framed it, becus it was passed a long time ago. It fixed 10 per cent. as legal commission, I guess, but it certainly didn't say how many times the stuff could be sold, an' there's the meat in the cocoanut.

At that time I was still simple enough to believe Fourth of July orations was almost the voice from Sinai instid of merely to show how fit the speaker was fer Congress. Senst I've had a chanst to figger out the workin's of the system I found out that such stuff is on'y kep' on tap to kid folks into thinkin' they're still livin' under a republican form of gov'ment. I got it pretty clear in my head now why this food machinery runs eternally without any interference from anybody. Poor ol' Monk Eastman — he was in the wrong business. Jesse James made the same mistake, him an' all the other honest holdup men of song an' story. They wa'n't sufficiently organized. They wa'n't coordinated

But don't you think fer a holy minute that this 'ere mafia ain't to be reckoned with. Listen here. A neighbor of mine, Jim Lacey, is what I call a good orchardman. He'd bought a run down place that had a lot o' fruit on it. The trees was pretty well demoralized, but one block o' Grimes Golden was nice twenty-year-old trees, an' he got busy with 'em. He sprayed 'em an' sprayed 'em, till they was clean as a new napkin, an' he took off about 400 bar'ls of apples as smooth as wax.

"It's a darn shame," Jim says to me, "to sacrifice that stuff to them commission butchers to make four profits off of without turnin' a hand or riskin' a dollar. I'm gonta see if I can't git somethin' fer 'em." So he come down to the city an went to the buyer of one o' the biggest fancy stores they is, an' showed him some of the apples. The feller says if they was all like that he'd take the hull lot, but he wanted 'em in small shipments.

"Suit yerself," says Jim; "I'll send ye twenty bar'ls a week. All I wanted was to git somethin' like a price fer 'em."

So he begun to ship. About the third lot, he got a short letter tellin' him they wouldn't need no more. He come down to New York an' asked the feller what was the matter with 'em. He said nothin' was the matter with 'em. They was just what he wanted.

"Well," says Jim, "what did ye stop 'em fer? I got three hundred bar'ls left."

The feller hummed an' hawed, an finally he says: "I wouldn't want to have this repeated, but the produce men got wise that we was buyin' this stuff, an' served notice on us that we was gonta have a hell of a hard time gittin' any other fruit when them Grimes was gone. It's a darn shame," he says, "but ye see the hull pitcher—we simply got to git on the wagon an' ride, an' pay the full fare."

[This is the fourth of a series on the Farmer's side of it. The concluding article will appear in an early issue.]